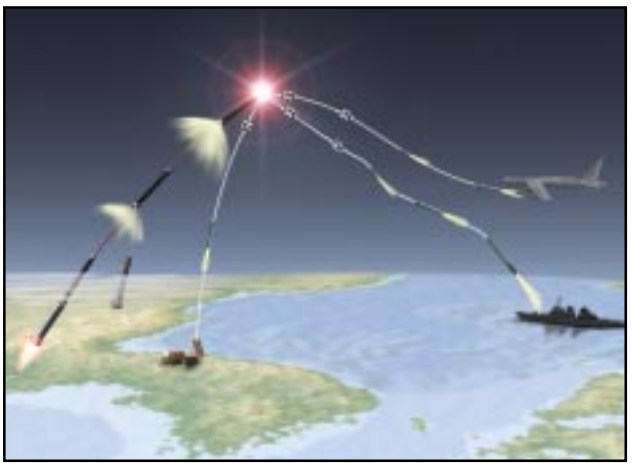
MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY
MDA In-depth
Making Ballistic Missile Defense A Reality...

Ballistic Missile Defense System Interceptors

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is developing a Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) that destroys enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight – boost, midcourse, and terminal. The BMDS Interceptors program's primary objective over the next few years is developing an interceptor capable of destroying Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) while their booster rockets are burning. Destroying an ICBM early in its flight is most desirable since it cannot release a lethal warhead and countermeasures until powered flight is complete. The longer-term objective is to develop an interceptor that can kill an ICBM after the rocket has burned out.



MDA is using an evolutionary development approach to build and test these new interceptors. The first generation of these interceptors will be built and launched from trucks that can be driven up close to the border of the threatening nation. We call this Block 08 since it will be tested fully between 2008 and 2009. Over time, the missile will be integrated into US Navy ships and eventually satellites in low earth orbit. In 2003, MDA is placing contracts with industry to build and test the truck-based ICBM killers. One year later, concept design work for a space based test bed begins.

Near-Field Infrared Experiment. A major early experiment is the near-field infrared experiment. The objective of the experiment is a close-up view of a burning ballistic missile at conditions that are truly real world. The data it collects will verify performance of the kill vehicle (KV) and tracking sensors for boost and ascent phase engagements, and provide the foundation for developing the BMDS Interceptors program.

Missile Defense Agency
7100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-7100

http://www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo/bmdolink/html/

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